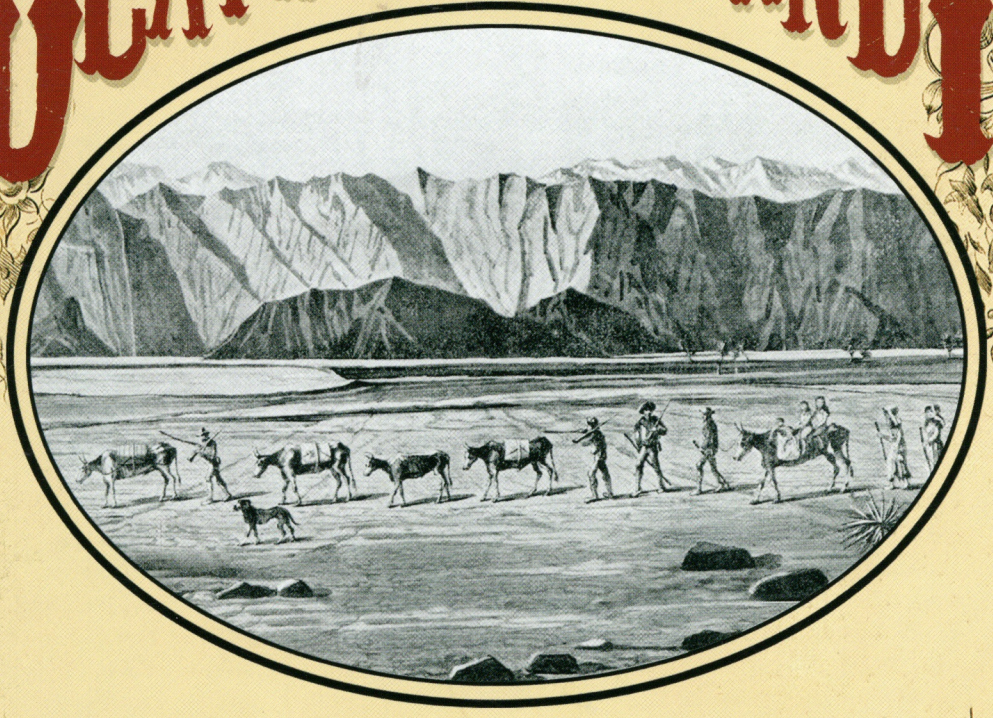
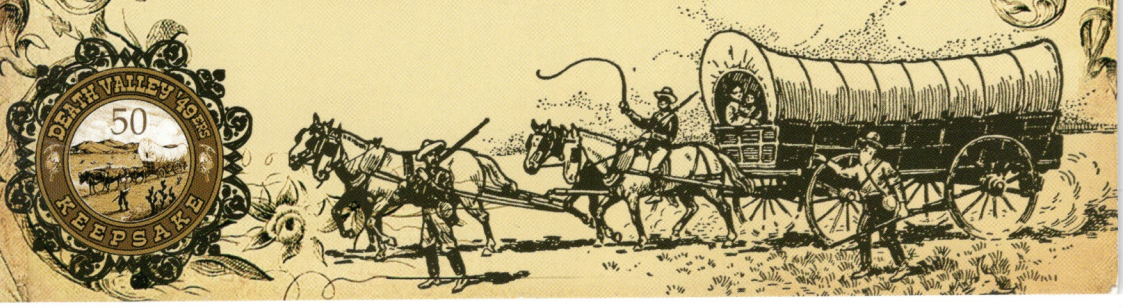
DEATH VALLEY & MANLY



SYMBOLS OF DESTINY

by Ardis Manly Walker

edited by Marvin Jensen & Jean Pickard



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Death Valley & Manly

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by

Ardis Manly Walker

Edited by
Marvin Jensen & Jean Pickard

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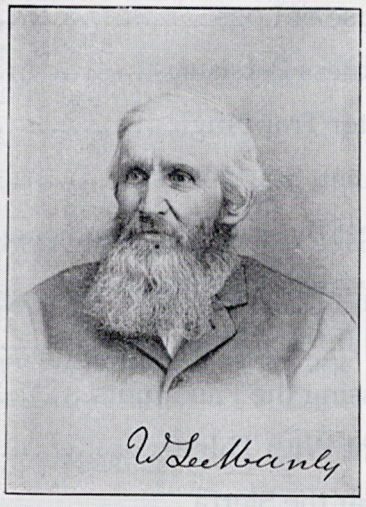


William Lewis Manly

FOREWORD

by Ardis Manly walker, 1962

DESTINY IS a flowering under many complex and long-enduring influences. This is true of nations as well as men. Now, as the destiny of the world seems ready to blight, we might well examine our own in the light of history. There we may find the secret of survival.

Our most important secrets are wrapped up in the lives and times of those who achieved our destinies. And no achievement has been more typical of the basic miracle from which our nation evolved then "manifest destiny."

This was the dream which Thomas Jefferson envisioned when he dispatched the Lewis & Clark Expedition to the shores of the Pacific. It was the theme of oratory of Senator Thomas Benton and his associates, who urged the sure march of the new republic westward until there would be no unconquered frontiers between them and the boundless Pacific Ocean.

But there were many transitions to be achieved between dream and reality. These were dependent upon the character and courage of the citizens of the nation who shattered those frontiers. Their accomplishments began with pathfinding and culminated in the creation of a new commonwealth on the West.

A peculiar hardihood of character and body was necessary to achieve each step toward the national goal. History gives no better example of such hardihood than can be found in the epic of the Gold Rush.

And the life of no individual more completely summarizes the transition between raw frontiers and settled communities than does that of William Lewis Manly, hero and chronicler of the Death Valley tragedy.

For this reason, the spotlight of history may well focus on Death Valley and Manly to give a theme and a backdrop for the drama of the conquest of the West.

Chapter I
FIRST FRONTIER

IN 1820, New England was a frontier. On April 6 of that year William Lewis Manly was born into the frontier environment of St. Albans, in the state of Vermont. His parents had broken trail from Hartford to "carve a farm out of the green forest that covered the cold and rocky hills."

Green-forested hills had met his grandparents from England and from Wales when they landed as part of the historic trans-Atlantic migration associated with the Pilgrim fathers.

Life was simple. It was rooted among the sterile New England rocks. It was stern enough to challenge the basic survival faculties of men. Survival meant giant labor to clear the pine, hemlock, maple, beech, and birch. It took an able-bodied man one year to salvage one acre of such land from the wilderness. Here Manly's father carved a toe-hold for existence.

As Manly remembered later, "Economy of the very strictest kind had to be used...Main strength and muscles were the only things dispensed in plenty. The crops raised consisted of small flint corn, rye, oats, potatoes and turnips. Three cows, ten or twelve sheep, a few pigs and a yoke of strong oxen comprised the livestock...A great ox-cart was the wheeled vehicle, and this, in winter, gave place to a heavy sled, the runners cut from a tree having a natural crook, and roughly, but strongly, made."

Here the family reserved the place where maple trees were thickest for a sugar grove. Apples were quartered, strung on a long string or twine, and dried before the fire for winter use. Women and girls washed, carded, spun, and wove sheep wool into clothing. Flax was pulled, then rotted where it was spread in the green meadow. The women then broke and dressed it and wove it into cloth. Clearing of the land brought cordwood. It also brought bark stripped from hemlock and traded to the tannery for the tanning and dressing of cowhides after each slaughter. From this leather family moccasins were made by neighbor-

ing Canadians or, on red-letter days, a traveling shoemaker stopped by to trade his services in the making of more fashionable foot wear.

The Manly family wrested a hard living from a hard land. Before he was ten, Manly worked with a wooden fork to scatter grass for drying in the wake of his father's scythe. After the grass had been hauled away in the lumbering family ox cart, Manly followed, gathering the last scattered wisps in the wooden teeth of his rake. Winters were bitter and unproductive, and a blade of grass might mean survival for gaunt animals housed against the winter in a crude log barn.

Chapter II
FIRST MIGRATION

The edge of this frontier of his early youth bordered the shores of Lake Champlain.

Manly has said, "...from this point, with the wondering eyes of childhood I looked across the waters of the narrow lake to the slopes of the Adirondack Mountains." Wave upon wave of other mountains spread out toward the infinite West. And other more primitive frontiers beckoned to this youngster even as he gazed.

At the moment, his Far West was Ohio. His father and his uncle James Webster talked of that country so far away. People said the land was there for the taking and the soil was rich and deep — not like the rocky New England landscape. A traveler had seen it and returned to tell of its wonders.

So, the Manly family and Uncle James got the "Western fever," a very contagious and very prevalent epidemic of the time. In the spirit of their young nation, they laid plans for a move westward to a new frontier. Uncle James had a team of good horses and a wagon. He made a large box to fit in the wagon bed into which he could pack most of the worldly goods he was to transport. Such things as food and bedding for daily use he placed in a commissary chest under the seat.

Manly's father owned a fine Morgan mare and a light wagon which served as a family carriage. This wagon Manly was chosen to drive behind his uncle's team, while his parents took passage by water. Thus, before he was ten years of age, Manly entered into a pattern of pioneering which was to become the trend of his life over many new horizons.

The two wagons rolled out of St. Albans in a southerly direction along the shores of Lake Champlain. Thence, their road at times approached near enough to the Erie or the Champlain canals to afford young Manly glimpses of strange, new life. He watched other boys manage teams that pulled canal boats. He listened to the rough talk of vulgar men imbibing at dives along the way. Barefoot, scantily dressed children playing among pigs, ducks, and geese in dingy doorways, and women in short dresses and brogan shoes gave him shocking contact with a rougher life pattern than he had known before.

Slowly the wagons moved through the bogs ad across crude log bridges, at last reaching the frontier village of Cleveland. Here Manly and his uncle spent the winter. Manly said, "I went to the district school here, and studied reading, spelling, and Coburn's mental arithmetic, which I mastered."

When the snow melted they continued through rain, mud, and brambles to reach Detroit and head on West. Here they met Manly's parents who had continued on to the Michigan frontier in answer to reports here was more and better land for the taking.

Chapter III
HOUSE OF LOGS

In Jackson County, Michigan, the Manly's settled in their next frontier. Clearing and plowing the land and building on it helped to push back their nation's wilderness another step.

Manly has recalled, "Our houses went up fast-all rough oak logs, with oak puncheons, or hewed plank, for floors and oak

shakes for a roof, all of our own make. The shakes were held down upon the roof by heavy poles, for we had no nails. The door of split stuff was hung with wooden hinges, and the fireplace of stone was laid up with the logs...We then built a log barn for our oxen, cow, and horse, and got pigs, sheep, and a chicken as fast as chance afforded."

Manly's father gave him a smooth bore rifle "suitable both for ball or shot", and urged the youngster to assume the responsibilities of family hunter. These duties were performed eagerly, and the wild game, especially venison, brought in by William became a major contribution to the family larder based, of necessity, on wilderness resources.

The stalking and taking of wild game was fun for frontier youth. It was also part of a rather grim struggle for survival, where hunger and pinched faces could be the penalty for an unsuccessful hunt.

Under these conditions Manly's native talents as woodsman and marksman developed early and fast. While yet a child he had become a dead shot and a deadly stalker of game. His young body had been tempered and toughened beyond its years. Fate seemed to be preparing him for the fearful emergencies of the future—emergencies that were to become an unescapable factor in the westward surge of a young nation to the Pacific.

Manly observed, "There had been from time to time rumors of a better country to the west of us, and a sort of pioneer or Western fever would break out among the people occasionally."

Manifest Destiny, it would be called. And it seems that the young and sprawling United States was conditioning itself in all its aspects to achieve this destiny.

President Thomas Jefferson had given impetus to the dream by dispatching the Lewis and Clark Expedition on its fantastic journey to the mouth of the Columbia River. Senator Benton and others had successfully urged upon the Congress the financing of a survey of the trail to Santa Fe. But what could have been of more importance in shaping the westward course of national ex-

pansion and the destiny of young Manly was the expanding fur trade beyond the wide Missouri.

Trapping and trading in furs bred intrepid men with continental vision. These men moved into the wilderness of the farthest West. They sought the source of every stream and every Indian trail. It was a big continent, but they spanned it on both sides of the Continental Divide. During Manly's formative years, the mountain men were making history. Back and forth between the Missouri and the Pacific, and between the Columbia and the mouth of the Colorado, they moved with eyes for every pass and every water hole.

No doubt the youthful Manly had heard something of the exploits of such famous mountain men as Jed Smith, Ewing Young, James Ohio Pattie, and Kit Carson. Certainly his career was to be affected mightily by the activities of Joe Walker, who had no peer among the men of the mountains. But that's another part of this story.

For the moment, "fever and ague" had hit the new settlers of Michigan. After a second season of this malady, Manly decided, "I'd rather catch chipmunks in the Rocky Mountains than live in Michigan."

Certainly his consciousness of the Rockies must have been due to tales drifting back from the camps of traders and trappers. This awareness, no doubt, stirred Manly, as it did many others of this time, with an urge to move often and perhaps to penetrate the frontier that receded toward the West.

During the winter of 1839 and 1840, however, Manly took three more months of schooling, "getting as far as the Rule of Three in Daboll's arithmetic." He split rails to pay for his winter's board. Then, with another youngster, Orvin Henry, he scored timber for the Michigan Central Railroad then under construction. His wages were thirteen dollars per month, half cash, and the working hours were long and hard.

Then it was that he and his companion decided to go west in search of their own fortunes. They built a boat of three white-

wood boards. In it they stowed their guns and gear, and on a beautiful spring morning in 1840 they launched it on the Grand River.

Manly said, "The stream ran west, that we knew, and it was west we thought we wanted to go."

Day after day they drifted down the river lined with primitive hardwood forests. Night after lonely night they camped on the shore in primeval solitude. As the river approached Lake Michigan they began to see pine timber and the evidence of crude logging operations. Near the mouth of the river they took passage on a lumber schooner. Sailing to the west side of the lake, they landed at Southport. By hiking west on blistered feet, they reached the lead mines of Wisconsin Territory near Mineral Point.

Manly remembered, "The country was rolling, and there were many beautiful brooks and clear springs of water, with fertile soil."

This was a land to his liking. It was free of the fever and ague. So he and his companion spent a year stopping wherever they could find work for the moment. Then, with their meager savings, they returned to their homes in Michigan.

Chapter IV
SICKNESS PERSISTS

In Michigan, it was as Manly could have anticipated. The ague was still in evidence. In fact, while making a recovery from a case of "bilious fever," he decided to head west again; this time to trap during the winter when furs were prime and work was scarce.

On this occasion Manly struck out alone. He went to Huron, then took a steamer to Chicago, "a small, cheaply-built town, with rough sidewalks and terribly muddy streets."

Fortunately, he found a man going west with an empty wagon. Manly hired the man to haul him to a friend at Round

Prairie. From there he traveled by stage to Blue Mounds.

Manly recalled, "I walked about ten miles to the house of a friend named A. Bennett, who was a hunter and lived on the banks of the Pecatonica River with his wife and two children."

The Bennetts, too, were to figure prominently in Manly's career.

Still week from his illness, Manly rested for a few days at the Bennett home. That winter he joined with Bennett in marketing and hunting for deer, which they sold to the Cornish miners at Mineral Point for twenty-five cents a quarter. Then he trapped in the spring, mined lead with Edwin Buck in a profitless summer venture, and chopped wood for thirty-five cents per chord during the next winter.

Chapter V
WINTER TRAPPING

By the next fall, he and Buck decided on a trapping and hunting excursion to the north toward Lake Superior. They engaged Bennett to take them by wagon as far as possible because of the weight of their traps and gear. They crossed the Wisconsin River and arrived at Prairie du Chien, where they met a French trader who furnished them additional supplies as well as information about country beyond. They then continued along the divide between the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers until Bennett decided not to take them further because of his fear of meeting Indians on his return home alone.

Manly and Buck now turned their back on civilization. They picked up their traps and guns and camping gear, and headed into a winter as rough and severe as any faced by the mountain men. On Manly this winter was to impose the conditioning that toughened him morally and physically for the terrible ordeals that awaited him on other frontiers.

To quote Manly, "It may be interesting to describe how we were dressed to enter on this winter campaign. We wore mocca-

sins of our own make. I had a buckskin jumper, and leggings that came up to my hips. On my head, a drab hat that fitted close and had a brim about two inches wide. In fair weather I went bareheaded, Indian fashion. I carried a tomahawk. Oiled patches for our rifle balls on a string, a firing wire, a charger to measure the powder, and a small piece of leather with four nipples on it for caps-across my breast, so that I could load very rapidly. When out of camp I never left my gun out of reach. We had to be real Indians in custom and in action." This could have been a picture of mountain men.

During the bitter Wisconsin winter, Manly remembered one routine he practiced in order to survive. He would shoot a porcupine and drag it behind him along the trap line; cutting off the more choice morsel for his own consumption, while using the rest of the carcass for bait.

After the rugged privations of their winter expedition, they totaled a neat profit in furs. These they sold at Prairie du Chien to the French trader.

Manly spent his share of profits for "eighty acres of good government land." As far as he was concerned, however, it was destined to lay fallow.

During the winter of 1848-49, rumors of Marshall's fabulous gold discovery in California excited the ever-compulsive urge to migrate westward which had stirred the imaginations of Manly and many of his friends over the years.

As Manly put it, "Mr. Bennett was aroused and sold his farm, and I had dreams at night of digging up the yellow dust. Nothing would cure us then but a trip, and that was quickly decided on."

Chapter VI
BENNETT STARTS WEST

The plans were that Bennett would carry Manly's baggage in his wagon until they met farther west on the trail to California.

Meanwhile, Manly was to return to Prairie du Chien to trap awhile and buy himself a pony to ride to the mines. Their plan did not work out.

This Manly learned when he returned to Mineral Point in response to a letter from Bennett. Here he found that Bennett had been gone for two weeks, taking Manly's outfit with him.

Manly had no choice except to strike out alone. He crossed Iowa "over wet and muddy roads" and fell in with some wagons west of the Des Moines River. He camped with them until they approached the Missouri, where he forged impatiently ahead, seeking some word from the Bennetts.

Finding none, he agreed to work his way west as a "bull whacker" with a wagon train owned by Charles Dallas of Lynn, Iowa. Here he met John Rogers, a young giant of a man, who became his friend and was thus enmeshed in the evolving net of his fate. Here, too, he shared in the historic national adventure of westward migration as he whacked oxen along the great caravan route.

On this trek the world he had learned of from the talk of trappers and traders opened up before him. He watched great buffalo herds move across the land. By day he saw the Sioux and Pawnee on the move across their wild domain. At night he stood guard against the plains Indians lest they stampede the stock of his wagon train.

He paused to view historic landmarks featured in sketches of pioneer artists and in the day journals of those who crossed the plains — Court House Rock, Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluff, the Sweetwater and Independence Rock.

At Fort Laramie his train fell in with a company of U.S. soldiers headed for Oregon by way of Fort Hall. These men told him his train was too late to cross the Sierra Nevada before snowfall, and that it would have to winter in Salt Lake. Dallas also discussed this problem with his family and stated that he would discharge all of his drivers at that point rather than board them all winter.

With this matter still under discussion, they moved up the course of the Sweetwater and breasted South Pass, from which springs forming headwaters of streams at the crest of the continent trickled toward the West.

At Pacific Springs, the first of these westering waters, the drivers had gone into consultation as to their future course of action. On the banks of Green River, at the mouth of Big Sandy, they made their decision.

As Manly explained it, "We put a great many 'ifs' together and they amounted to about this: If this stream were large enough; if we had a boat; if we knew the way; if there were no falls or bad places; if we had plenty of provisions; if we were bold enough to set forth on such a trip, etc.; we might come out at some point or other on the Pacific Ocean."

Their boldness was fortified by fear of Mormons, with whom they would have had to spend the winter in Salt Lake. Six drivers and the Dallas cook decided to take to the river. These included W. S. McMahon, Charles and Joseph Hazelrig, Richard Field, Alfred Walton, John Rogers, and Manly. The latter sold his pony to Dallas, and in turn purchased such provisions as could be spared from the wagon train. The boys then reconditioned an abandoned boat "about twelve feet long and six or 7 feet wide." This was their passport to the mysterious depth of the unexplored gorge of the Colorado.

Chapter VII
WEST BY WATER

It was not to serve as passport for the whole distance. Nevertheless, as the boys shoved their boat away from the shores of Green River and paddled and poled into the current, they became early entries into one of the most colorful phases of Western history-man's dangerous trials at riding the great Colorado River system through to its discharge into the Pacific.

In the fall of 1867, James White, emaciated, blistered and sun-

burned, was to be helped from a raft and carried out of the waters of the Colorado at Callville. His fantastic story of death and suffering while on a tumbling raft journey down the Grand Canyon was to be broadcast by newspapers throughout the land. In 1869 John Wesley Powell and his crew were to work two boats down the tortuous course by means of man-killing portages through jumbled boulders that line the most hazardous rapids.

From then on down to the present, the conquest of the Colorado by means varying from boats of special design to modern inflated inner tubes has captured the fancy of men. Heightened interest in this matter has focused extreme attention on a growing controversy as to whether James White really achieved the first conquest of the Colorado.

While Manly and his companions cannot vie for the honors of being the first down Grand Canyon, the adventures they now faced earned then an early place in the history of those who have tested their lives and skills against the unrelenting fury of the river. Their tumbling journey down the rapids of Green River never reached its junction with the Colorado. Yet, there is no part of the recorded hazards of those who followed them which they did not share.

After drifting and portaging for several days, they found their first evidence that anyone had been in the canyon before them. It was an old cottonwood tree, bearing the marks of an axe on its trunk. At another place, just below a portage through a labyrinth of boulders, Manly recalled, "I saw a smooth place about fifteen feet above where the great rocks had broken out, and there, painted in large black letters, were the words "Ashby, 1824'."

It would seem that the mountain men were still beckoning, even in this solitude so enveloped in the roar of the river.

Just below this point, Manly described their first major setback. "We found that another big rock blocked the channel..., and the water rushed around it with a terrible swirl. So we unloaded the boat again and made the attempt to get around it

as we did the other rocks. We tried to get across the river but failed. We now, all but one, got on the great rock with our poles, and the one man was to ease the boat down with the rope as far as he could, then let go and we would stop it with our poles and push it out into the stream and let it go over, but the current was so strong that when the boat struck the rock we could not stop it, and the gunwale next to us rose, and the other went down, so that in a second the boat stood edgewise in the water and the bottom tight against the big rock, and the strong current pinned it there so tight that we could no more move it than the rock itself."

After losing their boat, they chopped down pine trees and fashioned three canoes with which to continue their watery journey. Then, after shooting many rapids and making many tortuous portages, Manly recorded their next catastrophe. "The stream was so swift that it caused great, rolling waves in the center, of a kind I had never seen anywhere else. The boys [in other canoes] were not skillful enough to navigate this stream, and the suction drew them to the center, where the great waves rolled them over and over, bottom side up and every way."

Everything that would not float was lost. However, they retrieved one of the two capsized canoes, adjusted their loads, and continued down the river. After two more days of travel between frowning bluffs, they emerged into a more open country where cottonwood and willow bordered the stream. Here their solitude was broken by the distant sound of gun fire, and soon they landed in front of three Indian lodges. And here they met the great Ute chief, Walkara.

By means of sign language, he warned Manly that to continue down the river would mean death and destruction. He then mapped the way along the Indian trail to Salt Lake.

Manly took his advice and his directions, and there brought the canyon voyage to an end. At this point on Green River, Manly and his party had spent at least two weeks of travel time and had mastered the river for approximately 450 miles between

the mouth of the Big Sandy and the crossing of the Old Spanish Trail between Santa Fe and Los Angeles. This exploit was an historic accomplishment in itself.

Chapter VIII
REUNION WITH BENNETT

On his way to Salt Lake in search of information and supplies relative to the journey to California, Manly "reached Hobble Creek near Salt Lake where there was a Mormon fort, and also a number of wagons belonging to some prospecting train."

Manly added, "There seemed to be no men about, and we were looking among the wagons for someone to inquire of, when a woman came to the front of the last wagon and looked at us and, to my surprise, it was Mrs. Bennett, wife of the man I had been trying to overtake ever since my start on this long trip."

The Bennetts had brought Manly's belongings through safely. After a night of reminiscing around the campfire, Manly agreed to accompany the Bennetts wagon to California, acting as scout and hunter along the way.

There were many other wagons scattered about. These Argonauts had been warned against going west by way of Fort Hall and the Sierra Nevada at this late season, because of the danger of encountering early season snows. They had joined the Sand Walking Company, which was to be guided to Los Angeles by way of the Old Spanish Trail, by Captain Jefferson Hunt, a veteran of the Mexican War, who had been over the proposed route.

At last, the train of 107 wagons moved out in grand harmonious style toward Little Salt Lake. Soon they were overtaken by another train led by Captain Smith. Smith showed a map exhibiting a short-cut due west from the Spanish Trail and over a pass discovered by Joseph Walker in the spring of 1834. By taking the route, he said, the company could save weeks of time and hundreds of miles in the race for the gold region. The Reverend J. W. Brier, who had never been over the route either, backed the logic

of Smith with his ministerial eloquence. The result was that most of the wagons turned west along the trail indicated on Smith's map, leaving Captain Hunt to continue along the Spanish Trail with a small segment of the original company.

Manly was joined by John Rogers to travel in company with the Bennett family.

He remembered, "We came at last to what seemed the summit of a great mountain, about three days' journey on the new trail. Immediately in front of us was a canyon, impassible for wagons, and down into this the trail descended. Men could go, horses and mules, perhaps, but wagons could no longer follow that trail, and we proposed to camp while explorers were sent out to search a pass across this steep and rocky canyon."

After two days of vain search for a passable route, more of the wagons turned back to catch up with Captain Hunt on the original route. Approximately one hundred of these confused people, however, gained vague assurance from later reports, and stubbornly maintained their course toward the West. Among these was the Bennett wagon. Bennett was delayed while replacing a broken axel. He then continued with other late-starters who included "J. B. Arcane [*sp*], wife and child, two Earhart brothers and sons, and some two of three other wagons."

Other groups included the Mississippi Boys, the Bug Smashers, the Jayhawkers, and "the party of nine or eleven." Attaching themselves to the Jayhawkers were J. W. Brier, his heroic wife, and three children.

Most of these groups started out in company until the dread fear of death, exhaustion, starvation, and thirst sent groups and individuals to take their separate ways in the struggle for survival.

Manly expressed the situation best when he said, "It seemed as though there were many men from the parties scattered all around the country, each one seeking out the path which seemed to suit best his tender feet or present fancy, steering west as well as mountains and canyons would permit, some further north,

some further south, and generally demoralized, each thinking that as a last resort he would be able to save his own life."

In this spirit, these people struggled through barren desert wastelands and jumbled mountains until, at last, they were funneled into what was to be to some of them "The Valley of Death."

Chapter IX
THE BURNED WAGONS

The story of haste in the race for gold, which caused many wagons to leave the known route and strike directly westward without a guide and without knowledge of the wilderness into which they ventured, lends theme to the Death Valley adventure wherein they strove vainly to escape this desolate entrapment with their worldly goods.

In desperation the Jayhawkers burned their wagons near present Stovepipe Wells. Before the fire they dried the lean meat of their slaughtered oxen then started westward again on foot over the mountainous barrier of the Panamints. The Jayhawkers were all single men who wanted no part of women and children on such a strenuous venture. But the Reverend James W. Brier and his heroine wife, Juliette, refused to be cast adrift with their children. They followed the Jayhawkers as the youngest and strongest party with the best chance of survival.

Like the Jayhawkers, Manly and Rogers were young and strong and footloose and free. But they stuck by the Bennetts, the Arcans and the Wades and their bewildered women and children.

These people moved southward along the valley floor from where they came upon it at Furnace Creek; seeking vainly to escape with their wagons and all the beloved personal treasures they contained. Giving up at last, they camped beside a sulphurous spring. Here it was decided that Manly and Rogers should strike westward in search of the California settlements that they

might return with provisions and rescue the others from their desert prison.

A famished ox was killed and the meat dried and packed. The animal was so pitifully starved that Manly and Rogers found room for seven-eighths of it on their knapsacks. As Manly later recorded in his book, they also carried with them "two spoonfuls of rice and about as much tea" from the meager store that they hoped would keep starvation away from camp during their absence. Manly afterward observed that "it seemed like robbery to the children." But the rice and tea were considered essential that the two young men might live to complete their mission. Moccasins were made from ox hide with the hope that they might withstand the hard, sharp rocks of deserts and mountains which lay between their stilled wagons and a civilization somewhere beyond the jutting skyline of the Panamints.

Of the leavetaking, Manly said, "Some turned away, too much affected to approach us. Mrs. Bennett was the last, and she asked God to bless us and bring some food to her starving children. We were so much affected that we could not speak and silently turned away and took our course...up the canyon."

Thus too young, half-starved men ventured into an endless horizon of bleak desert mountains toward the limitless sweep of the Mojave, carrying the fate of that desperate encampment on their weary shoulders. Thus began the epic adventure of the gold rush that would leave on the dim outlines of wavering trails evidence of starvation and death and of selfless heroism and sacrifice never surpassed in any of our annals.

Chapter X
CROSSING THE PANAMINTS

The canyon up which Manly and Rogers took their course has been identified by Mr. Carl I. Wheat, authority and explorer on the subject, as Six Springs Canyon. Arriving at the summit of the Panamints some ten mile south of Telescope Peak they took

stock of the terrain. Manly described the scene thus, "To the north was the biggest mountain we ever saw, peaks on peaks and towering far above our heads. [To the] south was nearly a level plain, and to the west I thought I could dimly see a range of mountains that held a little snow upon their summits...two hundred miles away. We saw at once to go over all these mountains and return within the limits of fifteen days which had been agreed upon between us, would probably be impossible, but we must try as best we could, so down the rocky steep we clambered and hurried on our way."

Any desert wanderer who has persevered to the summit of the Panamints, then beheld the limitless landscape of dead desert mountains and dry mesas and flats that edges away to melt into shimmering distance has seen what Manly saw. And, even on a full stomach, he has shared some of the misgivings that such a scene engendered in the heart of a starving man. But Manly and Rogers hurried on their way toward that mysterious and threatening horizon!

The rugged defile they followed down the mountainside has been identified by Wheat as South Park Canyon. When part way down the mountain they fixed eager eyes upon a lake nearby and a short distance to the north. On reaching the floor of Panamint Valley, the famished men crossed a stream of water flowing slowly toward the lake.

Manly said, "We rushed eagerly to it and prepared to take a big drink, but the tempting fluid was as salt as brine and made our thirst all the more intolerable."

Skirting the south or "wet playa" of the valley in the vicinity of the present ghost town of Balarat, Manly and his companion hurried across the sink and ascended the slopes of the Slate Range where they merge with the Argus Mountains. Here they struck the trail of the Jayhawkers whom Manly had last seen burning their wagons and drying stringy ox meat in Death Valley. They saw where the Jayhawkers had dug holes in the sand, vainly searching for water. They too, dug holes in the canyon

bottom for water which was not there.

In their race for survival the two men hurried on, following the trail of the Jayhawkers who had preceded them. Soon they came in sight of another valley and on it glittered another lake. Tortured by thirst, they hurried to the water's edge to taste the bitter brine of Searles Lake, a brine that was later to give substance to the magic and the millions that chemistry has woven into the economy of Trona and Westend, California.

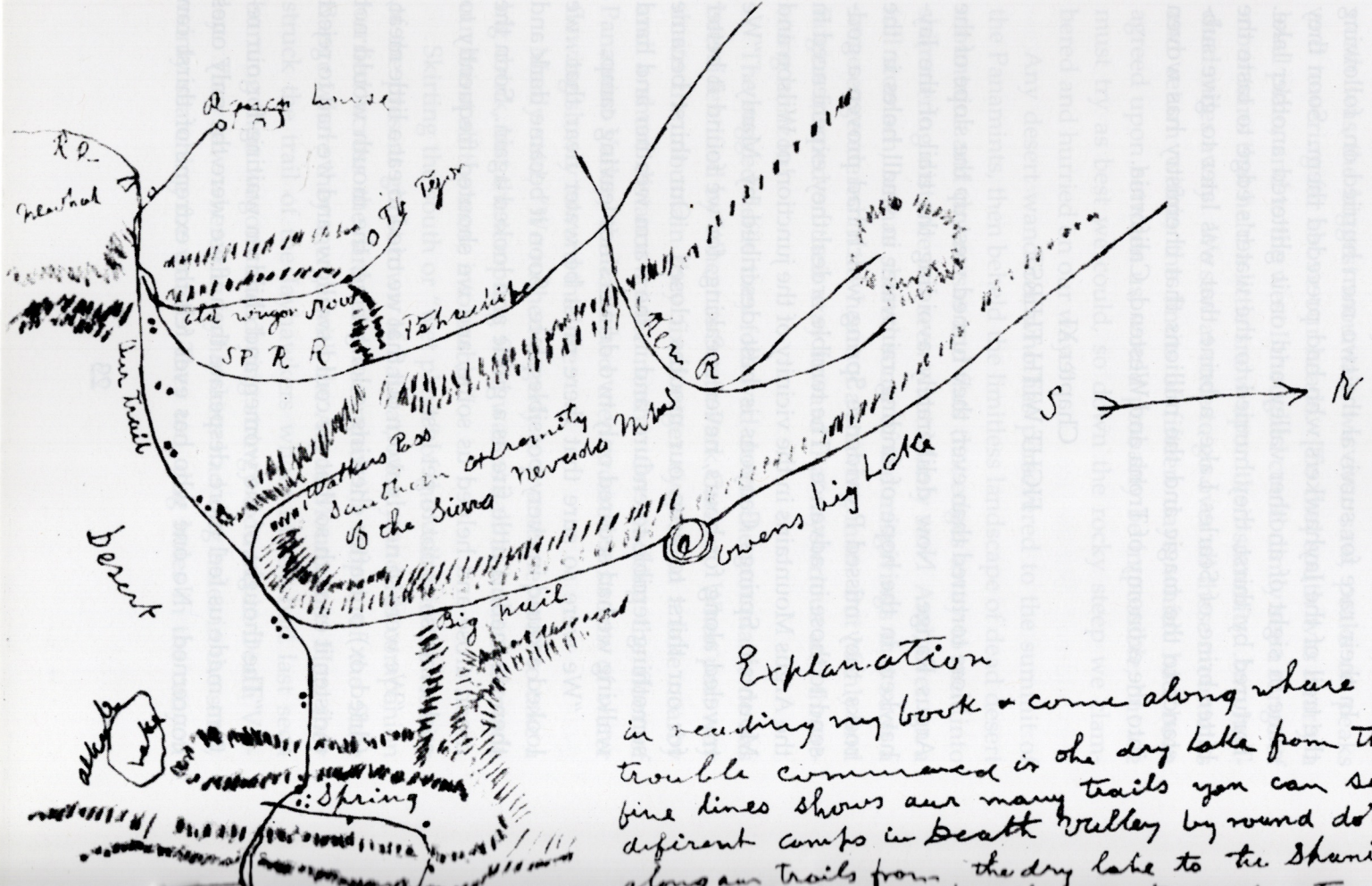
Chapter XI
FIGHT WITH THIRST

More tortured than ever, they turned west up the slope of the Argus Range. Now deliberately avoiding the trail of the Jayhawkers in the hope of finding rainwater in small holes in the rocks, they missed Providence Spring which had proven a godsend to those in advance. The terrible ordeal they experienced in the Argus Mountains in the vicinity of the junction of Wilson and Mountain Springs Canyons is best described by Manly. "We traveled along for hours, never speaking, for we found it better for our thirst to keep our mouths closed. Our thirst became something terrible to endure, and in the warm weather and hard walking we had secured only two drinks since leaving camp.

"We were so sure that there must be water near that...we looked around in every possible place. Soon it became dark and then we made a little fire as a guide and looked again. Soon the moon arose and helped us some, and we shouted frequently to each other so as not to get lost.

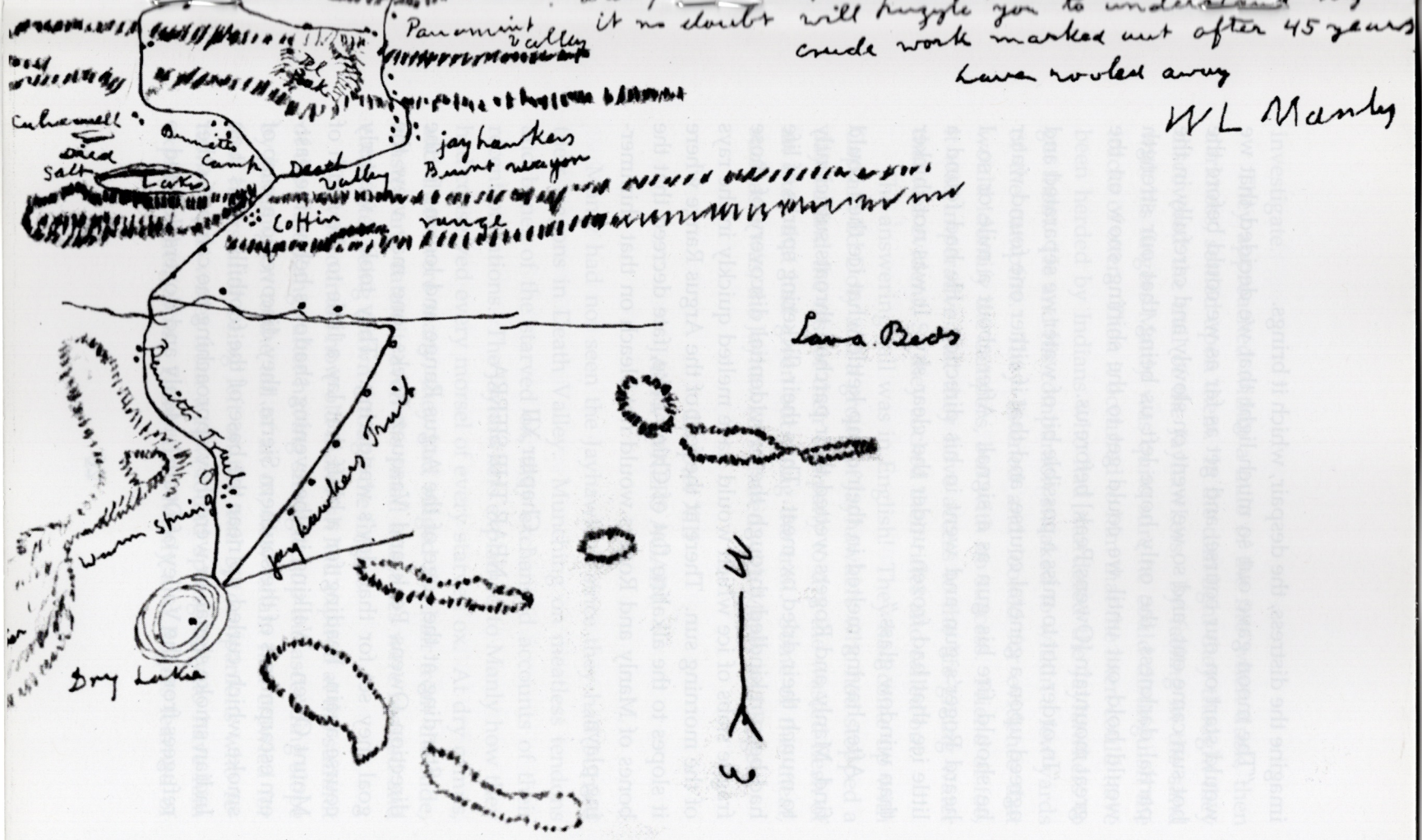
"We were so nearly worn out that we tried to eat a little meat, (dried ox) but after chewing a long time, the mouth would not moisten it enough so that we could swallow, and we had to reject it.

"The thought of the women and children waiting for our return made us feel more desperate than if we were the only ones concerned. No one who has ever felt the extreme of thirst can



Explanation

in reading my book + come along where our trouble commenced is the dry lake from there the fine lines shows our many trails you can see our difirent camps in Death Valley by round dots to all along our trails from the dry lake to the Shanish Road



it no doubt will puzzle you to understand my crude work marked out after 45 years

Lava roofed away

W L Manley

imagine the distress, the despair, which it brings.

"The moon gave out so much light that we decided that we would start on our course, and get as far as we could before the hot sun came out, and so we went on slowly and carefully in the partial darkness, the only hope left us being that our strength would hold out until we could get to the shining snow on the great mountain [Owens Peak] before us.

"In order not to miss a possible bit of water we separated and agreed upon a general course, and that if either one found water he should fire his gun as a signal. After about a mile or so...I heard Roger's gun and went in his direction. He had found a little ice that had frozen under the clear sky. It was not thicker than window glass."

After having melted in their camp kettle what ice they could find, Manly and Rogers wetted their parched throats sufficiently to munch their dried ox meat. Thus their flickering sparks of life had been rekindled through the providential discovery of those fragile slabs of ice which would have melted quickly in the rays of the morning sun. There at the foot of the Argus Range where it slopes to the alkaline flat of China Lake, fate decreed that the bones of Manly and Rogers would not bleach on that shimmering playa.

Chapter XII
NEAR THE SIERRA

Standing at the edge of the Argus Range and looking in the direction Owens Peak and Vasquez Rocks, one may view the goal they set for that day's wandering. They took a westerly course again, heading for a bluff that lay a little to the south of Mount Owen. Walking in the evening shadows below the eastern escarpments of the southern Sierra, they discovered a wisp of smoke which curled up near the base of the foothills. Was it an Indian smoke signal, or were they approaching the camp of other refugees from the Valley of Death? Manly and Rogers decided to

investigate.

They approached within a mile of the fire when dusk, then darkness, settled upon them. In the dim light they thought they discovered the trail of the Jayhawkers. By feeling in the sand with his fingers Manly was quite sure he could distinguish the tracks of oxen. Then it occurred to him that the oxen could have been herded by Indians who had murdered the Jayhawkers to get them. He and his companion sneaked to within a few yards of the campfire. They listened and looked for evidence that would identify the campers, but with no success. Friend or foe, it was imperative that they have access to the life-giving water that was evident. So they cocked their rifles and called out.

The answering call was in English! They had come up with Captain Ed Doty and a group of Jayhawkers who had stopped a day behind the rest of their company to dry the wasted flesh of an oxen that had given out along the trail. Some of this meat, such as it was, the Jayhawkers shared with Manly and Rogers.

Chapter XIII
JAYHAWKERS AGAIN

Manly had not seen the Jayhawkers since they had burned their wagons in Death Valley. Munching on meatless tendons and bones of the starved ox, they exchanged accounts of their recent privations. The Jayhawkers explained to Manly how they had conserved every morsel of every starved ox. At dry camps, and there were many, they had singed the hair from the hide, roasted and eaten it; even the small intestines were roasted and eaten after being drawn through the fingers.

They recounted how old man Fish had expired at the summit of the Slate Range after having struggled up the ascending slope by hanging on to the tail of an ox; how Isham had crawled for four hours after being left on the trail by companions who returned with water from a new-found spring only to have him expire in their arms. From them Manly and Rogers learned of

Providence Spring in the Argus Range. This spring they kept in mind should they be spared to return from the settlements with aid for those who waited beneath their wagons in Death Valley.

Next morning Manly and Rogers shouldered their packs and hurried along a trail which meandered southwest through limited greasewood plains. This seemed to them an Indian trail which forked to the right over Walker Pass and to the left toward Red Rock Canyon. By evening they had overtaken the advance party of Jayhawkers at a spring which produced barely enough muddy water to sustain life in the famished men hovering around it. This spring could have been at Last Chance Canyon as has been suggested by Carl Wheat, or in Red Rock Canyon as has been contended by others.

In this camp they found a group of despairing, disheartened men, many of whom gave them the names of loved ones whom they wished to be informed of their plight in which little hope of survival was entertained. Here is how Manly described the outlook, "There were no jokes, no mirth, and everyone seemed to feel that he was very near the end of his life, and such a death as stood before them, choking, starving in the desert was the most dreary outlook I ever saw."

At dawn Manly looked toward the south and west. Once more he saw the Mojave Desert spread out toward an illimitable horizon. Into it he and his companion plunged, following a trail that led they knew not whither. Knowing they had no choice, they stabbed blindly toward that horizon, praying that it would unveil to them the long-sought settlements, settlements that would enable them to return with life and hope to the women and children enveloped in the desolate silence of Death Valley.

Chapter XIV
TO ANTELOPE VALLEY

Bearing the evil tidings of the despairing advance party of Jayhawkers from the canyon encampment, they followed a dim

trail that skirted the present communities of Cantil and Mojave. They, too, were desperate in the stern realization that the great reaches of the Mojave Desert were taxing their waning strength while throwing up endless barriers of rock and sand and limitless wastes that continually melted into ever-receding horizons. These two men, still holding steadfast in their troubles hearts an unquestioning loyalty to those who trusted in their return, were now stumbling and striding across those wastes at the rate of twenty-five miles per day! Again the modern rockhound on a full stomach and with plenty of water in his canteen, might well marvel at the feat of endurance performed by these two starved young men.

Finally, as they approached the Antelope Valley, their dim trail played out and in the dusk of evening they lost it. However, they found a pool of rain water, such as stands now in winter beside U. S. Highway No. 6 in that region. They also found a dead Joshua tree. Here they were "very comfortable indeed, having both drink and fire."

Next morning they struck out for the lowest pass they could see in the mountains before them—the San Bernardinos. In the rolling foothills they found faint traces of their trail again. It led them toward the snow. In this mountain terrain there were signs of life. Soon a crow alighted on a nearby bush where he was dispatched by a charge of shot and packed into Rogers' knapsack for supper. Then an unwary hawk was shot and packed away. And then, blessing of all blessings, after reaching the pass and swinging down Soledad Canyon, they shot a quail. That evening, beside the first pure running water they had seen in weeks, they boiled the crow, the hawk and the quail.

Manly said the quail was superb while the hawk was fair. His culinary comment on the crow was as follows: "That abominable crow! His flesh was about as black as his feathers and full of tough and boney sinews...,and ever since that day, when I have heard people talk of eating crow as a bitter pill, I think I know all about it from experience."

Following down the canyon, they came to a region of live oaks. Then, on the brow of a hill, as if it were another wracking dream of the green hills of home from which they must soon awaken to the never-ending reality of desert hunger and thirst, their eyes beheld the vision of two horses lifting their heads in alarm and galloping away!

About mid-morning Manly experienced a sudden and very sharp pain in his left knee which grew worse as he worked his way down the canyon. In spite of his growing lameness which became almost unbearable, he hobbled on, desperately aware of his obligation to those who waited at the wagons. Then other miracles appeared to their marveling eyes; a chopped stump and a square shaft dug by the hands of man! Then, as they breasted a spur of hills, a beautiful meadow spread out before them, green and shaded with oaks. And the cattle of a thousand hills cropped its luxuriant grass. Manly said, "[it] was like getting a glimpse of a paradise, and tears of joy ran down our faces." A young steer was shot and the two ravenous men devoured its sweet flesh like savages.

Then, as they moved on, they beheld the miracle of miracles, a house! They had reached the Rancho San Francisquito near present Newhall. Here the Del Valles, early Spanish-Californians, took them in and would have mended their wasted bodies and surfeited their hunger with the true hospitality of the period. But the only request of Manly and Rogers had to do with their concern as to how they might get aid and return with it as fast as possible to those wagons huddled around a warm, sulphurous spring in the depths of Death Valley.

Chapter XV
HORSE BOUGHT

With the finances contributed by members of the Bennett-Arcan party they purchased three horses. Then, as an important afterthought, they picked up a little one-eyed mule from a group

of Argonauts headed for the mines. She was an nondescript little mule; but she was to take her place in this story among the outstanding heroines of western history.

Hoping to save precious time, Many and Rogers rode two of the horses while they packed supplies on the other horse and the mule. As they parted from the Del Valles, a senora hurried from the house and placed in their hands ripe oranges for the little children beneath the wagons. Thus, hardly pausing to mend their wasted and exhausted bodies, these two men faced the desert again with heavy, anxious hearts. They turned their horses toward the long, hard trail which led across torturous deserts and mountains and canyons to that forlorn spot where they hoped to find those they left beside the spring.

They hurried their animals to the point of exhaustion—hurried and pressed them as they had their own exhausted bodies in the bitter trek to the settlements. They obtained water in the rain pools of Antelope Valley. They stopped at Indian Wells where their famished horses immersed their heads almost to the eyes as they drank.

On they hurried across China Lake to Argos Mountains. Here they were forced to walk and lead the horses which were failing fast under a grueling pace without feed or water. The white mare on which Rogers had started the return journey walked blindly into a solid cliff and fell dead.

When they reached Providence Spring on the opposite slope of the Argus Range, it became necessary to bury provisions they could no longer carry. From there the gallant little mule bore all the cargo while the two remaining horses followed behind, scarcely able to carry their own weight. However, the horses were urged on in hope that they might still serve to bear the women to the settlements.

They crossed the Panamint Valley and started up a rocky canyon beyond. The little mule, pack and all, hopped up a three foot ledge in the canyon bottom. The horses floundered and failed. After nearly exhausting themselves from the exertion of

urging the horses, the two men reluctantly left them to their fate. As they toiled around a turn on up the canyon they were saddened to hear the pitiful neighs of the deserted animals. It was a tragic experience to them. They felt as though they had deliberately murdered the faithful and trusting beasts. But here, again, stark necessity and overwhelming anxiety left the scouts no choice.

They fought their way up the tortuous canyon on legs that moved drunkenly from sheer exhaustion. Then, suddenly, the two men and the mule stood before a solid rock wall which bridged the canyon with a sheer drop from side to side. The men eyed the barrier, then gazed hopelessly on the precious cargo that the gallant little one-eyed mule had carried all the way from the settlement. Strapped to the back of that ungainly little animal was the fate of trusting men and women and children. It seemed that all that they had suffered and all the sacrifices yet to come would end in nothing here in the depths of a rocky canyon where perpendicular walls rose so far above them on each side as to exclude the sun.

Chapter XVI
A FORLORN HOPE

It would have been easy to have lain down beside the trail that ended so abruptly. Such had been the fate of Isham and Fish. But Manly and Rogers had lived more lives then theirs. They were of a race that pushed inexorably toward the Pacific. Here was tested the courage, endurance and ingenuity of a people building the outposts of a young nation along the frontier of the West. In this tradition they bent their bodies to the task of survival.

Manly's description of two courageous men and an equally courageous little mule meeting and conquering disaster is one of the classics of western adventure. He tells it as he experienced it first hand: "We decided to try to get the confident little mule

over this obstruction. Gathering all the loose rocks we could and piling them up against the south wall, we built a sort of inclined plane along the wall, gradually rising until we were nearly as high as the crest of the wall. Here was a narrow shelf scarcely four inches wide and a space of from 12 to 15 feet to cross to reach the level of the crest. It was all I could do to cross this space. It was a forlorn hope but we made the most of it. We unpacked the mule and, getting all our ropes together, made a leading line of it. We fastened the leading line to her and with one above and one below we thought we could help her to keep her balance. Without a moment's hesitation the brave animal tried the pass. Carefully and steadily she went along, selecting a place before setting down a foot, and when she came to the narrow ledge she leaned gently on the rope, never making a start or jump. There was no turning back for her. She must cross this place over which I had to creep on hands and knees, or be dashed down fifty feet to sudden death. When the worst place was reached she stopped and hesitated. I called encouragingly and talked to her."

"It was a trying moment. It seemed to be weighed down with all the trials and hardships of many months. It was the time when helpless women and children hung in the trembling balance between life and death. I as nearly in despair and I could not help bursting into tears. Finally Rogers said, 'Come Lewis' and I gently pulled the rope. She smelled around and looked over every inch of the ledge, then took one careful step after another over the dangerous place. She crept, trusting to the rope to balance, until she was half way across, then another step or two when, calculating the distance closely, she made a spring and landed on a smooth bit of sloping rock below that led to the crest of the precipice, and safely climbed to the top. We would push on and carry food to the people; we would get them out some way; there could be no more hopeless moment than the one just past."

Chapter XVII
LITTLE MULE A HERO

In winning her way over the precipice, the little mule also won her way to a spring which scouts discovered a short distance up the canyon. Here they drank the first water they had tasted in more than two days. Refreshed, they won the summit of the Panamints, then picked their way down the canyon which had stalled the wagons of their party so many days before. At the mouth of the canyon they camped where they had first stopped on their way to the settlements.

From this camp they followed the tracks of the Bennett and Arcane wagons from where their westward movement had been stopped by the bluffs of the canyon. About seven miles along the way Manly stopped to adjust his lacerated moccasins. On straightening up he noticed Rogers ahead, leaning on his rifle and looking down at some object in the sand. It was the body of Captain Culverwell. He lay on his back, his arms extended wide and his home-made canteen, consisting of two powder flasks tied together, lying beside him.

That mute figure saddened their hearts and filled them with foreboding. Here was one of the people they had left at the long camp. Was his fate but a sample of what had happened to all of those whom Manly and Rogers had sacrificed so much to save? In spite of their body-breaking haste, had they returned too late? Saddened, subdued and profoundly concerned, the two men guided their mule along the wagon tracks. Soon they saw the wagons standing beside the sulphurous spring. Instead of the seven wagons they had left, there were now only four! And there was no sign of life about the lonely spot. The grayed and sagging canvas had been stripped from the wagon tops.

The two men sneaked closer—still no sign of life. Here again they decided to fire a gun while still far enough away to protect themselves in case Indians had seized the camp. Manly fired. The report churned the dead silence into cannonading echoes

which rumbled from canyon to canyon, then receded back to dead silence again. The scouts looked and listened in dreadful suspense. They prayed for a sign of life. In this moment of uncertainty it was hard to down the vision of the bodies of their other comrades scattered on the desert in common with the fate of Captain Culverwell.

Then a man scrambled out from under one of the wagons! He stood up and looked around. Then, seeing Manly and Rogers, he waved his arms excitedly and shouted, "The boys have come! The boys have come!" Then other heads appeared from under the wagons—the Bennetts, the Arcans and their children.

In his simple and unpretentious words Manly tells of the tremendous moment of meeting.

"Mr. Bennett and wife and Mr. Arcane [*sp*] came toward us fast as they could. The great suspense was over. Our hearts were first in our mouths, then the blood all went away and left us almost fainting as we stood and tried to step. Some were safe, perhaps all of those nearest us, and the dark shadow of death that had hovered over us, and cast what seemed to be a pall upon every thought and action, was lifted and fell away, a heavy oppression gone. Bennett and Arcane caught us in their arms and embraced us with all their strength, and Mrs. Bennett when she came fell down on her knees and clung to me like a maniac in the great emotion that came to her, and not a word was spoken. If they had been strong enough they would have carried us to camp on their shoulders. As it was they stopped two or three times, and turned as if to speak, but there was too much feeling for words; convulsive weeping would choke the voice."[1]

[1]By the time Manly and Rogers returned to camp the Wade family had left to find their own way out.

Chapter XVIII
THE ROAD BACK

After the joy of reunion came the grim revelation that 250 miles of rugged desert and dead mountains stood between them and the first settlements. Every step along the tortuous trail they would have to walk. Here they must leave their wagons and every personal treasure they contained.

These men and women and children in this lonely spot faced one of the most ominous of frontiers that the West had yet thrown up against the march of America toward the Pacific. Their reaction to that challenge typified a national era. They faced toward the setting sun, tossed aside all they had carried so far as precious comforts and luxuries. Stripped to their clothes and a morsel of dry, stringy ox meat, they trudged ever westward. Exhausted, they faltered and fell on many a rocky steep. But ever they struggled to their feet, tugging at some fallen companion. In this manner they won their way across the Panamints, across the Slate and Argus ranges and over all the desert sinks between.

At last, in that valley paradise, among those cattle on a thousand hills, they found sanctuary at the hearth of a race they were to dispossess. The Del Valles took them in and fed and comforted them in the grand manner of the Californios. Then from the beautiful Rancho San Francisquito they went their various ways to the golden hills of California.

Chapter XIX
STOP AT LOS ANGELES

Manly halted in the sleepy village of Los Angeles long enough to earn a few dollars and regain his strength. Then he and the one-eyed mule joined in the northward trek to the mines. At the edge of the town of San Jose he camped with his mule before striking out across the San Joaquin Valley to the Mother Lode. Here, unexpectedly, he again met up with Rogers and

Bennett. He continued his journey to the mines with Bennett. They crossed the San Joaquin Valley, living on elk and antelope, and made their way to the Mariposa diggings. Here Manly again entered into the pulsing pattern of life in America's newest frontier.

Caught in the whirl of prospecting and mining, he moved from camp to camp. Such place-names as Hang Town, Stanislaus, Gold Lake, Georgetown, Georgie Flat, Coloma, and Canyon Creek became the lore of his environment. Observant and interested, he carried with him a comprehensive picture of life in the mines when, after garnering a stake which would look ample back home in Michigan, he decided to return to the East by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Here again his adventures at sea, across the Isthmus and up the Mississippi by way of Cuba and New Orleans, were typical of the romantic pattern of the times.

Throughout his wanderings and during his days in the Mother Lode region Manly had kept a daily journal of his adventuring. Fortunately for posterity, he was a keen observer who fully appreciated the important historical significance of those times. Because of his awareness it was natural for Manly to generate subconsciously a growing compulsion to tell his wonderful tale.

Winter had set in as he trudged into Mineral Point, Wisconsin, to complete the cycle of his wandering. Snow was on the ground and he must wait until spring before pushing on to rejoin his parents in Michigan. During this enforced leisure he got out his journal. Using it as a guide, he started writing. He said he completed "over three hundred pages of closely written foolscap paper" containing "everything that had taken place during my absence, and it was recorded in regular form, with day and date, not an incident of any importance left out, and every word as true as gospel."

Then, deciding to return to California without completing his journey to Michigan, he forwarded his manuscript and journal to his parents.

Manly recalled, "I afterward learned that in time they received the bundle of papers and read it through and through, and circulated it around the neighborhood until it was badly worn...But the farm house soon after took fire and burned, my labor going up in smoke." However, Manly's work was not in vain. By studiously reviewing his journal and recording his adventures in careful detail, he fixed them with photographic exactness in his memory; an exactness which can be appreciated by those who have followed in his footsteps, book-in-hand, and observed the environment described in his pages.

In returning to California, Manly took passage down the Mississippi River, crossed the Isthmus of Panama and arrived through the Golden Gate. This time, in continuing to the mines, he became a passenger on the Sacramento steamer, Antelope.

At the mines, other place-names became a part of his picture of the ever-changing frontier;—Nigger Tent, Goodyear Bar, Downieville, Wisconsin Flat, Marysville, and Humbug.

Then, in the spirit of the times, Manly returned to the scenes of his early trials in the Death Valley region. Now he had joined with other prospectors of unquenchable faith in the search for the fabulous Lost Gunsight Mine, which others of the Death Valley party were reported to have found and lost, never to be found again.

Chapter XX
THE GROWING STORY

In his declining years Manly lived to respected old age in San Jose, the village of his choice, which was to become a city. He lived to record the culmination of a lifetime of frontiers.

He had lived vibrantly and with sensitive perception through all of those changing frontiers. He had faced them all with courage and enthusiasm. Now he had come to the place in his life when he sensed the tremendous importance of his adventures. Like the ancient Mariner, he was compelled to tell his fabulous story because of its significance to a vibrant young nation.

As early as 1877 he apparently first dictated his tale to the editor of The Pioneer, a San Jose publication. Then for nearly twenty years he continued to publish his reminiscence in a series of articles covering all phases of his pioneering life.

Thus his magnificent book, "Death Valley in '49," came as a direct result of years of patient toil in shaping expression for his life and the pattern of history it encompassed. Published in 1894 in San Jose by the Pacific Tree and Vine Press, it has been acclaimed as perhaps the most important single publication covering the California gold rush. In it the modest Manly accomplished the magic of relating the story of his own matchless heroism in the spirit of true humility which marked every act of his long and gracious life.

With classic simplicity and fidelity, he wrote in the spirit of Homer of olden Greece. In his case, however, he was Odysseus as well as Homer. His book has become a classic in Western Americana and an inspiration to all Americans whose hearts respond to the great westering rhythm which gave impulse to our pioneering. His tale serves to fortify our faith in all frontiers yet to come.

Near the close of his story, he observes, "Looking back over more than forty years, I remember that I was then a great lover of liberty..., and I possessed a great desire to see new country never yet trod by man."

"Geography has wonderfully changes since then. Six hundred miles of treeless prairie without a house brought us to the adobe dwellings of Fort Laramie, and four hundred were the long miles of Mormondom, still more than seven hundred miles to the Pacific coast. Passing over this wilderness was like going to sea without a compass."

His compass was a faith in himself an d in the new horizons he shattered every new day. And this was the faith of his nation.

His story has been told. And Manly, its modest hero, has concluded it with fitting words:

"The work that was laid out for me to do, to tell when and

where I went, is done. Perhaps in days to come it may be of even more interest than now, and I shall be glad I have turned over the scenes in my memory and recorded them. And on some rolling stone you may inscribe the name William Lewis manly, born near St. Albans, Vermont, April 20th, 1820, who went to Michigan while yet it was a territory as an early pioneer, then onward to Wisconsin before it became a state, and for twelve long, weary months traveled across the wild western prairies, the lofty mountains and sunken deserts of Death Valley, to this land which is now so pleasant and so fair, wherein, after over forty years of earnest toil, I rest in the midst of family and friends, and can truly say I am content."

Chapter XXI
THE MANLY MAP

Now that the romantic story of the Death Valley '49ers is becoming a household legend, mementos of that tragic pilgrimage have taken their place among the treasured relics of our great Southwest. Therefore it was a matter of national news interest during the third annual encampment of Death Valley '49ers when Chester Doty presented to Death Valley National Monument the rifle his grandfather, Captain Edward Doty, carried across Death Valley in 1849. Around it are being collected other historic items which modern '49ers hope to place in a museum planned for the Death Valley Monument.[2]

Among such items is the autographed map by Manly reproduced for this publication which the writer recently found in a rain-soaked copy of the first edition of Manly's classic story "Death Valley in '49." The discovery occurred during my term as president of Death Valley '49ers, Inc., certainly a coincidence which was not necessary to create more intense interest in the event.

[2]The Furnace Creek Visitor Center and Museum has displays dealing with the geology, climate, wildlife and natural history of the park. There are also specific sections about the human history and pioneer experience.

It was a winter afternoon. I had gone to my next door neighbor, Roy Jumper of Kernville, California, for advice on landscaping. At the conclusion of our conversation he said he had something to show me. It was a rain-soaked book. I examined the binding and title page. Yes, I told him, it was a first edition of Manly's book. I added that its damaged condition had reduced its value.

"I'm not interested in its value," he said, "I just wanted to know if you wanted it."

"I most certainly do." I replied, though with tongue in cheek, because I knew the book represented a costly repair job.

That evening, before the fireplace, while Mrs. Walker got the dinner dishes ready for drying, I carefully pried the rain-stuck pages apart, assessing the damage. I found the back flyleaf stuck to the cover. On prying it loose there was revealed a folded piece of wrapping paper with the upper part of a penciled note visible above the fold.

I read. "Got home all right—found all well—our boys goes to San Rafael tomorrow 14th. My best wishes for your immediate..."

With heightened interest I followed the note around the fold of the paper. It continued: "...recovery. I hope you and Mrs. Booth and your amiable daughter will always keep on the pleasant side of life by me you will never be forgotten."

Then I had to pinch myself to be sure that this was not another collector's dream from which I must awaken, for there was a simple closing salutation which read, "I remain your friend, W. L. Manly." It was dated "Aug. 14-94." Across the note was inked in large letters, "MAP." I peeped beneath the net fold of paper. There were exposed penciled tracings of a map.

Not looking further, I rushed to the kitchen with the ecstatic question, "Guess what I think I have found?"

Then I explained my discoveries to date and started back toward the fireplace. But I have a wife who has developed a deep interest in my hobby through humoring me in it. She grabbed

me by the coat-tail saying, "You finish the dishes with me. I want to share the rest of this discovery." Later we settled before the fire and, with fingers that were none too steady, unfolded the rest of that intriguing paper. It was a carefully drawn map with a note of explanation signed by Manly!

It showed the trails of the Jayhawkers and of the Manly party through all the rugged regions encompassed in their wonderings from a point just east of Death Valley. With careful accuracy Manly had placed such important reference points as Furnace Creek, Death Valley, Bennetts Well, Telescope Peak, Panamint Valley, Owens Lake, Searles Lake, Walkers Pass, the "old wagon road to Fort Tejon," and "the Spanish Ranch" at Newhall. It gives a clear picture of the general courses they followed. Perhaps it will afford encouragement to some student of the future who may wish to pursue further the studies of Dr. John E. Wolff and Carl I. Wheat who have done most toward establishing the actual canyons and watering places visited by the '49ers.

An additional interview with Mr. Jumper revealed that the book in which the map was found had been presented to him by his neighbor of 40 years ago, a Mr. Sherman. It was further determined that Mrs. Sherman was the "amiable daughter" of the Mr. Booth to whom the book had been originally presented and for whom Manly had drawn the map.

In publishing the Manly map the directors of Death Valley '49ers, Inc., have considered it appropriate to include a brief resumé of the Manly story as it touches on the route depicted. For the sake of smooth reading this story has been told without notes. All references to authorities are included in the text and all quotations are from Manly as edited by Milo Milton Quaife for the Lakeside Press edition of "Death Valley in '49."[3]

[3]Some changes have been made to the quoted sections to match Manly's original text ("Death Valley in '49" Pacific Tree and Vine Co. , 1894 edition).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ardis Manly Walker

Ardis Manly Walker was appointed by Governor Earl Warren, in 1949, to be one of the charter members of the first board of directors of the Death Valley '49ers. Their responsibility was to plan the 1949 State Centennial Pageant to be held in Death Valley on December 3, 1949. At the time, Walker was a member of the Board of Supervisors for Kern County. He had a great knowledge of the history of Death Valley and as such was very instrumental in the planning of this major event. In 1952 he became the third president of the Death Valley '49ers.

Walker was born on April 9, 1901 in Keyesville, California. His great grandfather came to California from Texas in 1853 and eventually settled in the Kern River Valley in 1864.

In 1910 his mother took her three sons and one daughter to Fresno so they could get a good education. He graduated from Fresno High and entered the Fresno Normal College, now California State University Fresno. He played on the first football, baseball and basketball teams and gave the school the nickname "Bulldogs." He did continuing education at UCLA and USC.

Upon completing his schooling, Walker went to work for Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York City. In 1932 he decided to leave Bell as he wanted to return to his hometown of Keyesville and write poetry and books. As a young boy Walker had a great interest in poetry and would memorize poetry and recite it as he walked to and from school.

In the fall of 1932, he met Gayle Mendelssohn and they were married in 1937. He continued to write poetry and books and Gayle would handle all the details of having them published. They had no children.

In 1938 he was elected Justice of the Peace in Kernville and in 1948 was elected to the Board of Supervisors of Kern County and served one term. Walker belonged to many organizations but was most devoted to the Death Valley '49ers. Gayle passed on September 6, 1988 and Ardis on January 16, 1991.

Both had expressed a desire for their home and its furnishings to be kept in tact after their deaths. The Walker endowment was established and now makes it possible to visit the only home of a valley historical figure that is intact.

For a more complete biography visit www.deathvalley49ers.org

ADDENDUM

Clampers & Death Valley '49ers Honor '49er Hero

This is an excerpt from an article published by the Lodi News-Sentinel Friday October 8, 1999.

By Christi Kennedy

The grave of William Lewis Manly lies in the shade of a towering oak. The large marble monument carved with his name is in excellent condition, compared to many of the crumbling headstones of other pioneers buried in the Woodbridge Masonic Cemetery on Lower Sacramento Road.

The Tuleburgh Chapter No. 69, E. Clampus Vitus along with the Death Valley '49ers will honor Manly and celebrate California's 150th anniversary by dedicating a plaque to Manly. The ceremony will be held today at 10 a.m. in the Woodbridge Masonic Cemetery in Woodbridge.

"To me, Manly is really one of the unsung heroes of the Gold Rush and that era. He deserves as much recognition as possible," said Tim Spenser, past president of the Tuleburgh Clampers. "The Clampers and Death Valley '49ers are proud to be in a position to give him that recognition."

Manly didn't find his fortune in the mines. After his heroic trek, he mined until 1859 when he bought a farm near San Jose. In 1894, Manly published his memoirs, Death Valley in '49. Manly died of a heart attack on Feb. 5, 1903, just shy of his 83rd birthday. He and his wife, Mary, now lie at rest in Woodbridge.

Ray Sisson, past President of the Death Valley '49ers, stands next to the newly dedicated monument for Gold Rush pioneer William Lewis Manly.

Manly shares his resting place with other pioneers at the Woodbridge Masonic Cemetery in Woodbridge, CA.

Manly's father-in-law originally owned the cemetery in Woodbridge. This may be the reason Manly and his wife are buried here.

ADDENDUM

Monument to John H. Rogers Dedicated

On Saturday, April 28, 2007 members of the Death Valley '49ers, officials of Merced County, along with members of the community assembled at the Merced District Cemetery to dedicate a monument to John H. Rogers. Death Valley '49ers President Marvin Jensen served as the master of ceremonies.

In 1999 Ray Sisson, then the '49er president, had a goal to place a suitable monument to the memory of both William Manley and John Rogers. The location of the Manly grave was known in Woodbridge, California but the location of Rogers grave was unknown.

Also dedicated during Sisson's year was a monument to the Brier family in Lodi. The Briers were also members of the wagon train.

Through the efforts of local genealogist Lois Jimenez, the group was able to trace the information available and substantiate the location of the John Rogers site in the Merced District Cemetery.

Certificates of appreciation were presented by County Supervisor Kathleen Crookham and City of Merced Mayor Ellie Wooten to the Death Valley '49ers. At the close of the ceremony President Jensen presented Lois Jimenez with a Life Membership in the Death Valley '49ers, Inc. in appreciation of her efforts in locating the Rogers site.

Death Valley '49ers Past President & Life Director Ray Sisson, Merced resident Lois Jimenez and 2007 Death Valley '49er President Marvin Jensen.

ADDENDUM

Death Valley survivors of 1849 honored at Lodi gravesites.

This is an excerpt from an article published by the Lodi News-Sentinel Friday October 6, 2001.

By Christi Kennedy and Ralph Lea

A family of heroes is buried at historic Lodi Memorial Cemetery.

For decades, the three graves in the cemetery's Pioneer Garden were unmarked, merely covered with grass and one shoebox-size concrete slab with the word "grave" on it. The mother, father and son buried there were, it seemed, destined to be forgotten.

The graves belong to the Rev. James Welch Brier, his wife Juliet Wells Brier and their son, the Rev. John Wells Brier, Gold Rush pioneers who barely survived a treacherous journey through Death Valley in 1849.

After recovering from their ordeal and near starvation, the Briers went on to live in many California communities. In the late 1850s and 1860s, James Brier led religious services near present-day Lockeford and Woodbridge and is credited with helping establish Lodi's first church, the Methodist Church.

John Brier was pastor at the First Congregational Church in Lodi from 1889 to 1894.

Event coordinator and E. Clampus Vitus member Tim Spenser.

In the 1890s, the elder Briers settled in Lodi to be with their son and his family. This is where they died and were buried with nothing lasting to mark their graves. But the family will be remembered at 10 am today in a special ceremony. Three freshly engraved stone markers and a plaque will be dedicated to the Brier family.

The Tuleburgh Chapter No. 69 of E. Clampus Vitus, the Death Valley '49ers and the Stockton Corral of Westerners will conduct the plaque dedication. Two descendents of the Brier family, who only recently learned of the burial site location, will attend the ceremony.

ADDENDUM

Arcan Tablecloth

Abigail Arcan. Photo Courtesy of the Bear State Library.

Abigail Arcan, her husband Jean (John) Baptiste & their young son Charlie were members of the 1849 Wagon train that became lost in Death Valley. They traveled along the way with the Asahel Bennett family and sometimes together with the Brier and Wade families.

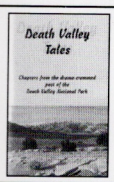
The Arcan and Bennett's were forced to leave all their worldly possessions behind when Manly and Rogers retuned to lead them safely to civilization. Abigail Arcan refused to leave the fine linen tablecloth she had woven prior to her marriage. She wrapped the tablecloth around herself and with the others walked to civilization.

The Arcan's settled in Santa Cruz in 1850. Abigail, pregnant during the Death Valley trek, delivered a baby girl on July 1, 1850 and named it after Julia Brier, a woman she knew from the wagon train. Julia became the first burial in the Evergreen Cemetery in Santa Cruz, where the rest of the family is buried.

The tablecloth has remained with Abigail Arcan's descendants and for many years has been in the possession of the late Edward Stark and his wife Jeanne. It has been on display twice but in recent years it has remained in a safe deposit box. Last year Mrs. Stark decided to donate the tablecloth so that others could view and learn from this piece of history. Since the Arcan family played a major roll in early Santa Cruz history and the family is buried there, Jeanne Stark decided to donate the tablecloth to the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.

Left to Right: Jeanne Stark, Marla Nova, Special Collections; Marvin Jensen, Death Valley '49ers and Ed Stark, son of Mrs. Stark view the Arcan tablecloth at the Special Collections department of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History.

Death Valley '49ers Books



Death Valley Tales, chapters from the drama-crammed past of the Death Valley National Park
by Ten Western Authors Death Valley '49ers publication #03 74 pages in Soft Cover

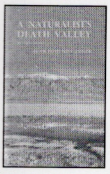
This publication has been in print since 1955, but in this newly updated edition all stories are true.

Mrs. Juliette Brier's account of her trek through the desert in 1849-50 and Russ Journigan's remembrances from the 1930's and 1940's are a wonderful addition, along with John Rogers Death Valley's Unsung Hero in 1849.

Goodbye, Death Valley! The Tragic 1849 Jayhawker Trek by L. Burr Belden
Death Valley '49ers publication #04 68 pages in Soft Cover

This work traces the largest of several parties who became mired in Death Valley during December 1849. Two members of this party, Jayhawkers, kept diaries of their trip which have been preserved.

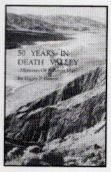
They were consulted by the author along with a scrapbook and numerous letters kept by the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. This work also includes a list of Jayhawkers.



A Naturalist's Death Valley by Dr. Edmund C. Jaeger
Death Valley '49ers publication #05 76 pages in Soft Cover

A Naturalist's Death Valley is a primer to help the thousands of admiring visitors to Death Valley National Park get a general picture of its wild flowers, trees, shrubs, reptiles, birds, insects, mammals, fossils and Native Americans.

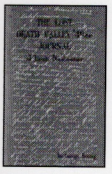
Dr. Edmund C. Jaeger was a nationally known naturalist who authored many book on the flora & fauna of California.



50 Years In Death Valley, Memoirs of a Borax Man by Harry P. Gower
Death Valley '49ers publication #09 164 pages in Soft Cover

"A collection of reminiscence and anecdotes of the Death Valley area between 1909 and 1960. Mr. H. P. (Harry) Gower was not only a resident but had a major influence on the course of events in the region during those years." - Dean Lemon, Life Director, The Death Valley '49ers

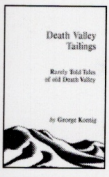
"Harry P. Gower was not just a spectator but often a prime mover in events in Death Valley. Surveying for railroads, routing claim jumpers, and managing a pioneer resort hotel." - L. Burr Belden, Past President, The Death Valley '49ers



The Lost Death Valley '49er Journal of Louis Nusbaumer by George Koenig
Death Valley '49ers publication #11 84 pages in Soft Cover

Louis Nusbaumer (1819-1878), was a German immigrant who left New York City in March, 1849, traveled to Independence, Mo., and there began his trip overland with William Lewis Manly and John Rogers to California.

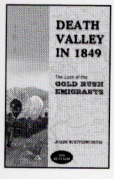
This is the story of his journey, which was kept in tow small notebooks, recovered in 1966, illustrated throughout with drawings, photos and maps. Made available here by the Death Valley '49ers organization.



Death Valley Tailings: Rarely Told Stories of old Death Valley by George Koenig
Death Valley '49ers publication #13 132 pages in Soft Cover & 144 pages First Edition Hard Cover

Recaptured within these pages are the stories that will help you to turn back the clock and relive the historic past. This definitely is a different collection of Death Valley tales. Each provides a more complete picture of one of the most fascinating area and eras of the Old West.

Subjects discussed include missing 1849 Death Valley Argonauts, gold and silver hunters, explorers, map makers, and inscriptions left on rock.



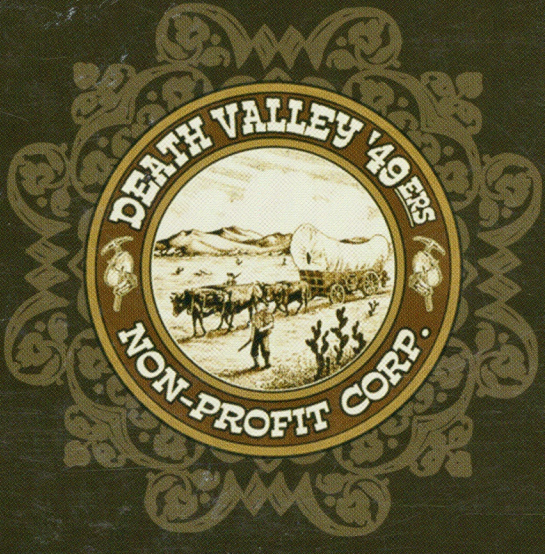
Death Valley in 1849: The Luck of the Gold Rush Emigrants (5th Edition) by John Southworth
Death Valley '49ers publication #14 132 pages in Soft Cover

This publication is a total rewrite of the best of the four previous editions plus many new developments. It is also the first and only available source which details all three escape routes taken by those hundred lost, hungry and thirsty souls who wandered into Death Valley's salty depths many years before that valley even had a name.

Stopped by the impassable eastern escarpment of Telescope Peak and faced by ultimate starvation if they didn't move on, those lost Gold Rush pioneers split into three groups.

It's all here, spelled out for you. Enjoy!

Orders may be placed by visiting our website at
www.DeathValley49ers.org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